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1944

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NEW YORK POST
NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN

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"The Searching Wind"

Play by Lillian Hellman; staging by Herman Shumlin; settings by Howard Bay. Presented by Mr. Shumlin at the Fulton Theatre, April 12, 1944.

NEW YORK SUN
April 13, 1944

Lillian Hellman's Play, 'The Searching Wind,' Eloquent and Powerful

By WARD MOREHOUSE

LILLIAN HELLMAN, who is the theater's first playwright or very close to it, has written an acrid and powerful drama of anti-appeasement in "The Searching Wind," which Herman Shumlin placed last night upon the stage of the Fulton. Here is a play, from the standpoint of writing and production, that takes its place as the theatrical event of the season of 1943-44 to date.

This new piece will be compared, of course, with Miss Hellman's others. Perhaps it should be observed at the outset that the flashback device she uses in telling her story, or her two stories, in "The Searching Wind," has its distractions and disadvantages; that her drama is never quite so satisfying as "The Little Foxes," nor of such cumulative emotional appeal as "Watch on the Rhine." But still there is so much to it, and of it, and there is such pungency in the writing and expertness in its staging, that it gives additional prestige to the author and to Mr. Shumlin, her producer-director.

In "The Searching Wind" Miss Helman delivers her indictment against appeasement and appeasers and registers her fear of a repetition of it in years to come. She writes with discernment and considerable bitterness of a generation that saw and sensed the rise of Fascism and stood by and let it happen—of the fumbling and the evasion, of the frivolity and compromise, the selfishness and unawareness.

This new drama at the Fulton is panoramic. It covers twenty-two years in turbulent world history and in the lives of its three principal characters—a man and two women, one of them his wife and the other who loved him before his marriage and who stayed on in his life. The play's personal story is intertwined with the passing of world events, from the beginning of Fascism in Rome and Berlin to the time of the Munich pact.

There are two acts to "The Searching Wind" and three scenes to each. The play begins in Washington of 1944 — this very spring. The scene is the home of former Ambassador Alexander Hazen and his wife, Emily. Catherine Bowman, who has been Emily's closest friend since girlhood and with whom Hazen had an affair when he was attached to the American embassy in Rome twenty-two years before, has been invited to dinner. There follows a flashback to the historic day in Rome in 1922 when Mussolini was marching on the city, and then for the final scene of the first act the action is returned to the Potomac drawing room.

In Act II you meet the people of Miss Hellman's triangle in Berlin during the pogrom of 1932 and in Paris in 1938, at the time of the Munich appeasement. The play's final scene, its showdown scene, is again the Washington home of the Hazens. And this time, after twenty-two years of world upheaval and evasions in the unresolved lives of Hazen, Emily and Catherine, the facts are faced, things that have been unsaid are said—and in the presence of the young son of the Hazens, who has returned from the fighting front in Italy with a leg that must come off, and because those who had been in that same Italy twenty years before had seen, heard, known and merely stood by. This climax scene, with Montgomery Clift contributing a thrilling performance as the wounded corporal who wanted to know why, is indeed a powerful one.

THE CAST

Moses Taney	Dudley Digges
Samuel Hazen	Montgomery Clift
Ponette	Alfred Hesse
Sophronia	Mercedes Gilbert
Emily Hazen	Cornelia Otis Skinner
Alexander Hazen	Dennis King
Catherine Bowman	Barbara O'Neil
First Waiter	Edgar Andrews
Second Waiter	Joseph de Santis
Hotel Manager	Walter Kohler
Eppler	William F. Schoeller
Edward Halsey	Eric Latham
James Sears	Eugene Earl
Count Max von Stammer	Arnold Korff

"The Searching Wind" has been given a distinguished production. Howard Bay's fine realistic settings reveal the luxury of a Washington drawing room, the crumbling grandeur of a hotel in Rome, the corner of an exclusive restaurant in Berlin, the tastefulness of the Hotel Meurice in Paris. Aline Bernstein has done an excellent job with the costumes. And the Shumlin-directed cast comes through.

Cornelia Otis Skinner brings her poise and skill to the role of Emily. Barbara O'Neil, an increasingly effective actress, is the neurotic Catherine. Arnold Korff gives a marvelous performance as a Nazi diplomat at the time Germany was going its way unchecked, and this scene which he plays with the American Ambassador who is about to report indecisively to his country, is one of the play's strongest. Dudley Digges provides truth and humor in the role of the testy and outspoken American publisher who is also under Miss Hellman's indictment. He foresaw the peril of Fascist rule with terrifying clarity but he retired in the face of it.

The role of the Ambassador Hazen falls to Dennis King. He is superb. It's his best work in our theater to date. There are moments, such as the final scene in which his soldier-son speaks, that he seems to age before your very eyes.

Perhaps it's not Miss Hellman's best play, "The Searching Wind," but it is a drama of sincerity and stature, and something of which she and the New York theater can be proud. It will be at the Fulton for months to come.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
April 13, 1944

'The Searching Wind' On the Fulton Stage

By ROBERT GARLAND

IN "The Searching Wind," which arrived last night at the Fulton Theatre, Lillian Hellman has once more signed her name to a play of the first importance, a vivid, vital, world-minded drama which Herman Shumlin, Miss Hellman's guide, producer and friend for many a successful undertaking, has produced for all its worth. All it's worth is a great deal, judged by any theatrical standards.

Here, as in "The Children's Hour," "The Little Foxes" and "The Watch On the Rhine," Miss Hellman writes with skill, assurance and deep political insight. But, above, below and around these invaluable theatrical attributes, is her flair for characterization. She —and you!—know her people through and through.

And Herman Shumlin also knows them through and through when he goes about his casting. Nowadays, at the Fulton, the people in the play are of three dimensions. This is true not only of the Emily Hazen, the Alexander Hazen and the Catherine Bowman who make up the leading roles, but of such fleeting fillers-in as a Hotel Manager, a First Waiter, and, most of all, Count Max Von Stammer.

Triangular, But—

When you hear it scene by scene in 45th Street, the story told so skillfully by "The Searching Wind" is neither complicated nor difficult to follow. Even so, it would be no easy matter to recount it here. For its social and sociologic roots reach back into the past, as deep as World War I—of which World War II is a prolongation—and to Rome, 1922; Berlin, 1923, and Paris, 1938.

Superficially, it is the old familiar triangle, the eternal story of the woman who lost her man, the woman who won her man, and the man they continue to desire. But Miss Hellman has mixed it up with an American Ambassador to France; a lifelong friendship between two women; a fine, factitious old fellow who is the father of one of them, and an injured soldier who is his embittered grandson.

As the author of "The Searching Wind" has set it down on paper, as the players at the Fulton perform it under Herman Shumlin's firm but sensitive direction, it is always a tender and frequently a terrifying play—tender in its picturization of the frailty of the most high-minded human relationships, terrifying in its revelation of the far-reaching effects of a wrong, but thoroughly honest, political decision.

Digges Superb

In a role that has no immediate bearing on the main body of the play, Dudley Digges is superb. Gone is the boring old busybody of "Listen Professor!" Back is the Dudley Digges of "Liliom," "John Ferguson," "Major Barbara," "A Month in the Country," "The Doctor's Dilemma" and, most delightful of all Diggesian memories, Gramps, the ancient who dreed death in "On Borrowed Time."

A graduate of the University Players, the group that included Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Henry Fonda, Bretaigne Windust and Mildred Natwick, Barbara O'Neil turns in a beautiful performance as Catherine Bowman, the other woman in Miss Hellman's two-women-and-one-man triangle. It is my devout hope that we keep Miss O'Neil away from Hollywood for many a play to come.

Cornelia Otis Skinner is not quite as genuine as I'd like her to be as the Other Woman. I've a feeling that there're times when she'd rather be all by herself up on the lighted stage. Dennis King is as he should be as The Man, who is also America's Ambassador to France. Montgomery Clift's crippled soldier is sincerely moving, especially in the offering's final scene.

"The Searching Wind" brings new drama, dignity and delight to the Broadway sector.

NEW YORK POST
April 12, 1944

'The Searching Wind' a Mild Blast at Compromise and Appeasers

By WILELLA WALDORF

LILLIAN HELLMAN'S latest play, "The Searching Wind," reverently produced by Herman Shumlin last night at the Fulton Theatre, is a pretentious, well-meaning drama that always seems on the verge of saying something of tremendous import, but never does. It is windy, but not often searching.

Selecting as her protagonists an American diplomat and his family, Miss Hellman manages to include a scene in Rome's Grand Hotel at the time Mussolini and his Fascisti

marched on the city; a luncheon in a Berlin restaurant in the desperate days of 1923 when there were food riots and massacres of Jews; and an episode at the Hotel Meurice in Paris in September, 1938, on the eve of Munich.

This past history is recorded by means of flashbacks, for the play begins and ends in the Hazen home in Washington, D. C., in 1944, with the son of the house invalided home from Italy and in no mood for diplomatic double-talk.

Just before the final curtain young Sam hauls off and says what he thinks of father's scholarly compromise policies and mother's casual mingling with the elite of Vichy now safely ensconced in the United States.

The Eternal Triangle

It is not precisely startling to discover that a young man who has been badly wounded overseas has come home embittered and fed up with the mess his parents' generation has made, and is still making, of the world, but young Montgomery Clift gets a good deal of feeling into his big speech at the Fulton and it comes like a breath of fresh air into what had up to that time been a pretty stuffy conversation piece involving one of the dullest triangle plots in modern dramatic history.

The triangle moves right along with the rise of Fascism and Nazism until finally the situation in the Hazen family is apparently supposed to parallel the situation in the world outside. Plain speaking and mutual understanding are needed to clear the air.

Unfortunately the parallel is generally vague and superficial. The love affair between Alexander Hazen and Catherine Bowman began in Rome with the advent of Mussolini, and the next year in Berlin found Alexander comfortably married to Catherine's best friend, Emily.

As time went on the girls didn't see much of each other, but Alexander had children by Emily; Emily, lonely and bored, ran around with a decadent set, and Catherine, a school teacher, spent her small salary every summer on a trip to Europe to see Alexander.

Dudley Digges in Good Form

Since all three of these people were intensely dull, whether in Rome, Berlin, Paris and Washington, the only bright spot on the horizon until son Sam began shooting off his mouth was Dudley Digges as Mrs. Hazen's cynical old Dad, who owned and edited a famous liberal newspaper until he decided that nothing anybody could do made any difference to history anyhow, and sold out.

Mr. Digges has some of Miss Hellman's best lines and as usual he gets them off without missing a trick. If we could have had more of Mr. Digges and Mr. Clift, and less of Dennis King, Cornelia Otis Skinner and Barbara O'Neil, this reporter might have been less dampened by "The Searching Wind." All three are good in their separate ways, but their parts are so stuffy and one-dimensional that they are all pretty hard to bear. Arnold Korff came on in one scene for a brief but effective call as an elderly Nazi minister, and there were good performances by Mercedes Gilbert and Alfred Hesse as the Hazen servants.

Herman Shumlin has given Miss Hellman's play an expensive production beautifully designed by Howard Bay. We could wish that so much loving care had been lavished upon something a bit more significant. Whether Miss Hellman likes it or not, she has reached the point in her career where one expects something more arresting from her trenchant pen than "The Searching Wind."

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
April 13, 1944

The Searching Wind
Miss Hellman's Finest

By BURTON RASCOE

THE Searching Wind, by Lillian Hellman, which was presented by Herman Shumlin at the Fulton last night, is simply a beautiful, powerful and touching drama—not only Miss Hellman's finest achievement in the theater to date but one of the finest things by any playwright in many seasons. The intimate and immaculate little Fulton Theater is going to be much too small for it. That is obvious. The people who will want to see it, when the word gets about, could fill the Met for months to come.

For myself I cannot speak too highly in praise of The Searching Wind. In the first place, it represents another brilliantly successful experiment by Miss Hellman in the dramatic treatment of a hitherto unexploited phase of feminine psychology—with all the skill and insight she displayed in The Children's Hour and The Little Foxes. In the second place, it is a re-creation of important phases in the calamitous history of the past 22 years in a penetrating, unbiased and accurate manner, with all its tragic ironies made implicit by the impact of ideas and events upon an American diplomat, his wife, his former sweetheart and his son. In the third place, it is not only a masterpiece of ingenious and thoughtful playwriting but a bitter-sad arraingment of all those near-sighted and frivolous persons in positions of power and influence who encouraged the rise of dictatorships and an abjuration to them who now contemplate the war in Europe with humble and contrite hearts.

A Subtle Duel

Mr. Shumlin has assembled and directed a model cast for the presentation of Miss Hellman's inspired and thoughtful drama. Heading it are Cornelia Otis Skinner, Dennis King and Dudley Digges and, of these Mr. King gives the richest performance of his distinguished career. But aside from these three, who receive star billing, Montgomery Clift, Arnold Korff and Barbara O'Neil are also splendid, and the numerous supporting players are coached to sustain a perfect illusion of reality.

Miss Skinner's role is a difficult one, in that she must portray an unsympathetic character sympathetically; she must be at once triumphant and pathetic in a 30-year duel of mind and emotions with her closest friend, a girl from a poor family, whom she, an heiress to a great fortune, has known since childhood; and she must fight this duel with growing tragic intensity, blindly and against her will, because she is never sure of the motivation of her "friend's" torturing enmity for her until it is disclosed in a shocking showdown between the two, at the conclusion of which all three are left empty and emotionally dead.

I shall not spoil the play for you by disclosing the "story" of the fight between Emily Hazen (Miss Skinner) and Catherine Bowman (Barbara O'Neil); for it is a suspensful, psychological mystery until the denouement; but I can promise you it is no hackneyed love-triangle but a searching and subtle analysis of obscure phenomena of human behavior. . . . There are, by the way, no villians (on stage) in this play; they are all muddled, well-meaning, decent American people who are victims of their class and education in life, whose outlook is severly limited by the catchwords prevailing among the people with whom they have been brought up and with whom their social position forces them to associate. . . . So Miss O'Neil has a difficult part also, in which she must appear noble and fiendish, weak and strong, pathetic and assured at different moments; for Miss Hellman, in this play, is not painting in black and white but in subtle nuances of color; her characters are human beings, not tintypes.

Flashbacks in History

The play opens in the drawing room of the Hazen home in Washington at the present time and the final scene of the last act is a continuation of the scene with which the play begins. The intervening action moves backward first to Rome in 1922; thence to Berlin in 1923; thence to Paris in 1938. This permits Miss Hellman to present, with extraordinary force and concision, the contributing factors in the rise of Mussolini, the contributing factors in the rise of Hitler, the contributing factors in the appeasement at Munich and the contributing factors in the downfall of France. . . . A terrific scene in the last act is one in which the son (Mr. Clift) of the Hazens, gravely wounded in Sicily, after witnessing the personal tragedy in which his parents are involved, tells them heartbreakingly what has made him ashamed of them.

In a season of so much triteness, trash and frivolity in theatrical offerings playgoers will be humbly grateful to Miss Hellman, I am sure, for offering them something as fine and intelligent as The Searching Wind.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
April 13, 1944

A Drama With Teeth to It

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

LILLIAN HELLMAN'S new play is a challenging and largely absorbing one on a vital theme. The writing, at its best, has a brilliant sharpness. Handsomely produced, *The Searching Wind* gives the theater what it has lacked all season—a really rewarding serious play.

Along with its striking merits *The Searching Wind* has, however, its very palpable faults. As it is not Miss Hellman's most characteristic play, it is not her most distinguished one. In it she has almost deliberately abandoned her mastery of tight, clenched drama in an effort to encompass something larger. There are perhaps two plays here, or—more logically—one novel. What results, in terms of form, is a certain cleavage and a certain crowding. What results, in terms of substance, is that one part of *The Searching Wind* has great vitality and impact, and the other part very little. Fortunately, the really vital side is also the really significant one.

* * *

For that side tells, in a sense, the story of our time—of the 20 years haunted by the image of Fascism. The play is chiefly a political play: its three flashbacks are laid in Rome the day Mussolini marched in, in Berlin when Nazism was incubating, in Paris on the eve of the Munich pact. The principal character, moreover, is a career diplomat whose response to history in the making—though he himself could not have unmade it—sums up the tragedy of a grotesque optimism, a flaccid procrastination and a spineless appeasement.

Being a diplomat, Alex Hazen is too highly placed to be a very representative citizen of our time, yet politically too unimportant to be a really responsible one. But with his belief that good can somehow come out of evil, he mirrors the muddled and sometimes disingenuous official thinking that allowed Fascism to prosper.

The play makes anything but a villian of Alex; it merely portrays him as a man whose way of life and subconscious desires can always make out a case for compromise. In a moral sense, it is perhaps Alex's sharp-tongued father-in-law, a once great liberal who has cynically moved to the sidelines, that suggests a more conscious betrayal.

As an anti-appeasement play, *The Searching Wind* is a plea for the future as well as an indictment of the past. The final curtain goes to Alex's wounded soldier son, who demands a world worth being crippled for.

* * *

But the play provides a personal as well as political day of reckoning. The contemporary scenes turn on a reunion between the two long-estranged women in Alex's life—his wife and her girlhood chum, who has been his mistress. What comes of their meeting is not reconciliation but revelation—the fact that their roles with Alex sprang less from love for him than from a desire to hurt each other.

Miss Hellman has done what she could to fuse the two stories; has suggested, for one thing, that worldly wives can strongly influence political husbands; has suggested, for another, that in the very teeth of world

crises, private concerns remain the dominant ones. But this last, while a truth, seems also a subterfuge; too often the private and political matters seem forced to coincide by the exigencies of stagecraft.

The real cleavage, however, comes from making Alex the center of the political play, and the women the center of the human one. Worse still, the women are granted no elbow room, no chance for a real development and play of personality; they must meet in hurried, rather high-pitched conversations, they seem to live only in crises. And by playing their scenes all too stagily, Miss Skinner (as the wife) and Miss O'Neil make matters a good deal worse. All this, together with a final scene which, though moving, is too didactic, turns *The Searching Wind* into a faulty play.

* * *

For the rest, however, the play offers the kind of hard-hitting, genuinely adult writing that only Miss Hellman brings nowadays to the American theater. *The Searching Wind* is in no sense Shavian, but it does resemble Shaw in its incisve dialogue, its provocative ideas, its political awareness and its force of personality. On these grounds it greatly deserves success, and will have it.

As it is the male characters who really make the play, so it is the male actors who invigorate it. Dennis King's playing of Alex is sturdy and well-sustained. Dudley Digges acts the old liberal with a fine authority and wit, and Montgomery Clift the soldier son with remarkable sureness and conviction. And Arnold Korff, in a short scene, portrays an old German diplomat magnificently. Mr. Shumlin's direction is everywhere precise and understanding, and Howard Bay's sets look as they should.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
April 13, 1944

Perception and Poetry

By HOWARD BARNES

IN "The Searching Wind" Lillian Hellman has brought back a full measure of dignity, perception and beauty to the theater. Her new play is not all of a piece. She has set herself the audacious task of illuminating the mistakes and follies of a generation sandwiched between two world wars. The theme has a tendency to become as dislocated as the lives and actions with which it treats, but it has an eloquence and passion which have been badly wanting on the stage. With Herman Shumlin's aware production and the superior acting of a splendid company, the Fulton Theater offering is by all odds the outstanding drama of the season.

* * *

It is good to find a playwright coming to grips with the core of human experience which has been shared by most of us through a desperate period. Miss Hellman's hold on her material slips at times, as she tries to reflect the international debacle of the twenties and thirties in a personal parable. But her arrangement of supposed men of good will, who brought us to this terrible moment of the present, is bitter and lucid. Her chronicle of a diplomat's family has depth and a curious fascination, while it rises to a tremendously moving crescendo. Being a gifted stage artist, she has freighted her work with the abiding human values which immediately exonerated it from soap box oratory.

* * *

There are impassioned speeches in the final scene, for example, in which a badly- wounded soldier discovers that his famous father was an unconscious appeaser, and that his equally famous grandfather was a cowardly liberal. The writing fortified by the playing of Dudley Digges, as the old man, Montgomery Clift as the kid who is about to lose his leg for the mistakes of his elders, and Dennis King, as the American ambassador who could neither resolve his own life, nor steer a straight course for his country, can scarcely leave any one unshaken. There is no propagandistic bombast here. Instead Miss Hellman and her collaborators have flooded the stage with meaning and high poetry.

* * *

Where the author falters is in reconstructing the start of Fascism in Italy and Germany, and the beginning of the Fall of France, by rather cumbersome flash-backs. They depend for their personal interest on a vague triangle which involves her diplomat, his wife and the girl he might have married. The romantic misadventures of these characters are inevitably dwarfed by the international compromises and defeats which they obviously mirror. The play would have gained in coherence and feeling had it made more of the wise and weary grandfather and the expatriate boy who first begins to live when he joins the army.

* * *

Digges and Clift, in the aforementioned roles, never fail to give "The Searching Wind" the penetrating quality which the title connotes. The former is superb, whether he is defying Mussolini's henchmen in 1922 or upbraiding his son-in-law for shortsightedness on the eve of Munich. Clift brings a fierce intensity to the part of the disabled grandson which is the very stuff of fine acting. Meanwhile Cornelia Otis Skinner and Barbara O'Neil join with King in a brilliant interpretation of the play's lost generation triangle. Shumlin's staging never misses a trick while the Howard Bay settings and the costumes by Aline Bernstein are worthy of the fine drama which they decorate. The theater comes into its own again with "The Searching Wind."

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
April 13, 1944

'The Searching Wind' A Forceful Drama About World Appeasers

By JOHN CHAPMAN

UP to last night the stage season had gone along with nothing much on its mind. It had been funny, beautiful, cheap, melodious, dirty or fifth-rate, but its attempts at sober thought or thought upon current events had been less than weighty. It wasn't until last night that Lillian Hellman was heard from, and Miss Hellman is a girl to turn to when one wants a load on one's mind.

Her "The Searching Wind," appearing at the Fulton, is a strong and measured indictment of appeasers; not just the appeasers of today, yesterday or pre-Pearl Harbor, or those of Munich—but, too, of those who consented in their minds if not officially to Mussolini's march on Rome in 1922.

It is grimly and forcefully written, for Miss Hellman is an intense person and she is an expert at the playwriting profession. It is eloquently and sincerely played by Dennis King, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Dudley Digges, Barbara O'Neil and Montgomery Clift.

Love Is Grim, Too

And it has been directed by Herman Shumlin as if it were holy writ. Partly because of the writing and partly because of the pacing and delivery prescribed, fairly ordinary and completely familiar affairs of sex are given the same weight as affairs of international fate. This bothered me, because I felt a little silly getting grim and tense over Barbara O'Neil being in love with Cornelia Skinner's husband, as though this common enough triangle were something I should go right home and write about to Secretary Hull.

"The Searching Wind" is, of course, hindsight stuff. Miss Hellman does not try to show in detail how the history of the last 22 years should have been played to be played right. She shows how it was played wrong, and indicates by implication how it might have been if stronger men or stronger peoples had done differently.

Instead of being fought against, Mussolini walked into Rome with a national and international "fix" already made. Instead of being fought against, anti-Jewish riots in Berlin in 1923 were regarded painfully but inactively. By the time of Munich it was too, too late.

A Diplomat's Tour

Miss Hellman covers all this ground in six scenes and two acts, and manages to get the same individuals into all the events. Her principals are an American embassy attache—later an ambassador (Mr. King); his wife (Miss Skinner); their son, a wounded vet of World War II (Mr. Clift), and the woman the diplomat should have married (Miss O'Neil).

Miss Hellman's spokesman in the play is Dudley Digges, who, as a great publisher who gave up his paper when he found he mustn't tell the truth about Mussolini, is a crusty, sharp, bitterly humorous man of vision. He would not have compromised at Rome or anywhere else. His son-in-law, the diplomat, is a troubled fellow who knows things are wrong, but who doesn't see what else can be done. To him Mr. Digges says, "I feel sorry for men who are as tolerent as you."

Son Wants It Different

The drama opens, this Spring, in the ambassador's Washington home, and it flashes back to Rome, Berlin and Paris. It seems to know less what to do with the diplomat, the wife and the woman friend than it does with international affairs. Once in a while somebody wants to talk out this triangle, but the wife just closes her mind to it the way the world closed its mind to Fascism. The trio are individually unhappy and finally I found I wasn't caring what happened to them because they were getting to be bores.

At the end the wounded son has his say, and it is excellently said by Mr. Clift. He has learned all about his parents—what they've done and said—during a dinner at home with the other woman. On the morrow he is going to lose his injured leg. This country is welcome to it, he declares, if it has done any good. But he does not want this world again to be a playground for an international set of schemers, dabblers, fixers and crooks.

"The Searching Wind" is absorbing, all right, and intelligent theatre; but I cannot say it is stirring.

NEW YORK TIMES
April 13, 1944

THE PLAY IN REVIEW *"The Searching Wind"*

By LEWIS NICHOLS

ALMOST at the end of a season given over mainly to trivialities—some of them charming, of course—Lillian Hellman finally has brought the theatre down to cases. In her latest play, "The Searching Wind," she is exploring the current state of the world and the causes which brought about its miserable condition. She pays her sharp respect to the appeasers, who were wrong, to the lackadaisical and to those who when the battle first started against them withdrew and would fight no more. Since she is Lillian Hellman, she is not preaching a sermon but writing a play for the theatre, and it is a good one which should remain at the Fulton for some time to come.

* * *

It is no secret by now that in the expression of her convictions, Miss Hellman has one of the most honest and forcible pens in the business. From history she has seen that Munich did not work, that laissez-faire and uncertainty did not work either. In "The Searching Wind" she is insisting that the old mistakes be not repeated now or in the future. Since she is an excellent craftsman for the stage, she puts her thoughts into crisp, clear words,

and Herman Shumlin, her producer and director, has given her the actors who can do them justice.

Since "The Searching Wind" ranks so high on the season's list of plays, it would be a complete satisfaction this morning to report the whole thing excellent and let it go at that. Unfortunately there are several scenes which are not up to the rest, the play, like many another, being troubled by a love affair which is not as superior as its politics. When the two women and the man who form this triangle are discussing its various angles, "The Searching Wind" droops a little, but luckily the moments are not long enough to do lasting harm. And when it is back in its proper mood again, the play is about as good as they come. Miss Hellman clearly is the historian of the season.

* * *

"The Searching Wind" opens in the spring of 1944 in a Washington home. Present are a former American Ambassador, his wife, the son who has been wounded in Italy, the father-in-law who had been a liberal until he ceased working at it twenty years before. The play then goes back to Rome at the time of Mussolini's march, and proceeds through Berlin in 1923 and Paris in 1938. Back in Rome, the Ambassador had been a secretary at the legation, in love with one girl and marrying another; the love affair moves along with him to his subsequent stations.

* * *

Not the least of its assets are the play's list of actors. Dennis King gives an excellent performance as the man who became ambassador, and Montgomery Clift is equally excellent as the son who returned from Italy wounded. Dudley Digges never fails to get everything from a character, and the one of the retired liberal is built for him. Arnold Korff is in one scene as a German ambassador and makes even a Nazi statesman seem likable, and Alfred Hesse and Eugene Earl have other brief but effective parts. Cornelia Otis Skinner and Barbara O'Neil are the two women — the former playing the wife — and both suffer a little from the fact that Miss Hellman appears to have been more interested in her politics than in the love story. And quite properly.

In the scene in Rome, one of the characters reads from a news ticker that Victor Emmanual is inviting Mussolini in. Elsewhere in this morning's paper is a news item that the King is about to step out at the end of his part in the world play. "The Searching Wind" is as timely as that. And is, moreover, a credit to the theatre.

"— But Not Goodbye"

Play by George Seaton; production directed and designed by Richard Whorf; presented by John Golden, in association with Harry Joe Brown, at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, April 11, 1944.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
April 12, 1944

John Golden Presents '—But Not Goodbye'

By ROBERT GARLAND

DEATH is funny as all get-out at the 48th Street Theatre. It is funny as all get-out in the new comedy John Golden, of the East Coast, produced in association with Harry Joe Brown, of the West Coast. The title of the piece is "—But Not Goodbye." George Seaton wrote it, he of such picture plays as "The Song of Bernadette," "Coney Island," "A Day at the Races," "Charley's Aunt" and the as yet unreleased "Eve of St. Mark."

East and West, having met and worked harmoniously together, it looks as if they had a hit on their cross-continental hands. Last night's initial audience found Mr. Seaton's first play to its liking. A chuckling comedy, rather than a roaring rough-house, it's amusing in a quiet sort of way.

Directed and designed by Richard Whorf, "—But Not Goodbye" is human, easy-going, unusual. Even if three of its leading characters are as defunct as doornails before the evening's over, they manage to maintain their humanity long after they are supposed to be dead, if not exactly buried. Three live ghosts, yet not alive, they keep the story going and the folks out front in mild but merry laughter. Homey, let's call it.

Two Ghosts

As you must by now have gathered, the tenant of the playhouse in 48th st. is about the Griggs family which flourishes, but not too famously, along the New England coast in the summer of 1910. Sam Griggs is the father. Amy Griggs is the mother. Benjamin Griggs is the son. And Jennifer Griggs is the daughter. Papa Griggs has heart trouble. Not only has he heart trouble, but his son's savings also. These he has invested unwisely.

So when, near the end of the introductory stanza, he runs upstairs and dies, he brings chaos to his family. Especially to nice-boy Ben, who is planning to go to England to study the ancient art of shipbuilding. But with his papa and his earnings both among the missing, there's nothing he can do about it.

Before you can say "Blythe Spirit," Papa Griggs is back down stairs, dead, invisible to everybody but the audience. He is joined by his father. His father, having passed on at an early age, is a younger ghost than he. Joining forces, they manage to straighten out the mess the Griggs family has gotten into. In a modest, well mannered way, their ghostly efforts at collaboration are downright delightful.

THE CAST

Sam Griggs	Harry Carey
Howard Baker	Wendell Corey
Amy Griggs	Elizabeth Patterson
Jennifer Griggs	Sylvia Field
Tom Carter	Frank Wilcox
Ralph Humphrey	Hal K. Dawson
Jimmie Griggs	John Conway
Dr. Wilson	Raymond Largay
Benjamin Griggs	J. Pat O'Malley
Rev. Pritchard	Harold McGee

Good at Ghosts

At any rate, a shrewdly chosen cast makes the merry most of it under Mr. Whorf's seemingly casual direction. Harry Carey is better than the others as the Sam Griggs who is flesh and blood at the comedy's beginning, an energetic ectoplasm later on. Mr. Carey, long a favorite with this professional first nighter, is good at ghosts. Remember his old man returned from the grave in "Happy Land"? His ghosts have guts.

Elizabeth Patterson brings tragi-comic skill to Amy Griggs, wife and mother of her small town New England clan. Ever so often, as the life and death of Husband Sam is acted out on the 48th st. stage, Miss Patterson moves from comedy into tragedy with amazing skill. At either she is flawless, someone to behold.

The others do what they're called upon to do. J. Pat O'Malley makes his first Broadway appearance as the ghostly father of Harry Carey. . . . These, backed up by the unmentioned others, make "—But Not Goodbye" amiable and amusing, well up on any man's theatre-going "yes" list.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
April 12, 1944

'—But Not Goodbye' A Welcome, Charming Comedy About Ghosts

By JOHN CHAPMAN

OF all the motion picture scenarists who have tried their hands at the theatre this season, George Seaton has written the best play. His "—But Not Goodbye," which arrived last night at the 48th St., is a comic fantasy which inspires affection. It is appealingly, as well as amusingly, played by J. Pat O'Malley, Harry Carey, Elizabeth Patterson and seven associates.

If you tried to classify "—But Not Goodbye," you might say it is something like "Outward Bound," "On Borrowed Time," "Here Comes Mr. Jordan" or another fantasy in which Harry Carey figured, "Heavenly Express." It involves ghosts—ghosts and the gentle and decent things in human nature.

"Do not grieve," intones a parson to a girl who has just lost her father. "He is at peace at last." Whereupon Mr. Carey gives an unspiritlike snort and says, "That's what YOU think." For Mr. Carey by now is dead and he is plenty worried about the mess he has left.

Carey, an old shipwright, has kicked off from a coronary thrombosis in the year 1910, leaving a sweet wife, a daughter, a son—but no money. The poor old chump has, upon the advice of a land-crazy crony, invested the family savings in some real estate which hasn't sold as quickly as it should. The plot concerns getting this money back to the family, so that the widow will be taken care of, the daughter can marry and the son can begin his own shipwright's career.

Ghost Meets Ghost

Making things come right takes a bit of help from Mr. Carey's father, the aforementioned J. Pat O'Malley, a builder of sailing ships who was killed in a brawl at the age of 36. As soon as Carey has barked his shin on a chair upstairs and died from the resultant anger, he comes downstairs. He thinks he's still alive, but the first odd thing he notices is that the family doesn't hear him or see him.

Next thing he notices is his father, whom he hasn't seen since the funeral. Mr. O'Malley's portrayal of the father, a cockney ectoplasm who bosses his son even though he's only half his son's age, is constantly amusing. At first he can't be bothered by the troubles of living folk. He wants his son to get right out of there. "I know," he says, "You want to stay for your funeral. They all do. Don't do it. There's more lies told at a funeral than a testimonial dinner."

Works Up Some Lightning

But Carey won't leave until the money is realized from the real estate deal. Pa, sticking around, begins to like the late Mr. Carey's household because they are unselfishly and lovingly trying to help the others instead of themselves; so he gets the urge to help. An ectoplasm can't be of much use, for nobody can hear him and he can't even lift anything. But, with faith, a little cooperation can be

obtained from a high authority. In a pinch Pa can work a rainstorm, and he finally manages to put a lightning bolt where it will do the most good.

The company is excellently chosen and smoothly directed by Richard Whorf. Carey, homespun and forthright, has a hand-tailored part. Miss Patterson, as the wife, handles two lump-in-the-throat-making scenes with finesse. Sylvia Field, as the daughter, and Wendell Corey, as her fiance, are interesting, and so is John Conway as the son.

Frank Wilcox plays his amusing share of a hilarious scene in which the two ghosts try to make him give Miss Patterson her rightful share of Carey's real estate gamble, and Harold McGee is a properly sanctimonious preacher.

Seaton, whose screen credits include the Benny version of "Charley's Aunt" and the current "Song of Bernadette," has managed his fantasy skillfully and written his comedy well. "—But Not Goodbye" is a play of which you can become fond.

NEW YORK SUN
April 12, 1944

'—But Not Goodbye,' Sparse Comedy, Has Ghosts and Small-town Locale (1910)

By WARD MOREHOUSE

THE stage of the Forty-eighth Street Theater has been inhabited this season by nearly everything except ghosts and last night John Golden, in association with Harry Joe Brown, brought along a few of those in George Seaton's first play for Broadway, "—But Not Goodbye." A sparse and feeble comedy it is, amusing only occasionally, and containing homey reminders of the peach-jam era of the American drama.

"The Return of Sam Griggs" might be the title of Mr. Seaton's mild little play, for shipbuilding Sam does return, after dying without leaving his family a cent, and strives to make matters right by getting his rascally partner in a real estate deal to turn over $5,000 that is coming to the Griggs household.

Sam, with the aid of his father, who had passed on long before, wins out by acquiring faith, and with it the realization that his pretty daughter will be free to marry the geologist and that his son, who has a yearning for ship designing, can be off to England to build liners that will make the Mauretania look like a row boat.

Mr. Seaton, a Hollywood scenario writer of standing, has taken a New England coastal town as his locale, and his time is the age of comparative innocence, the summer of 1910. All the action takes place in the living room of the Griggs home, and the setting, designed by the versatile Richard Whorf, who also directed, must have taken John Golden back to "Turn to the Right." Or to "The First Year," as it did me.

But this new comedy is no such masterpiece. It is a combination of fantasy, antic vaudeville and slow-paced family comedy, and perhaps its better moments are those when it's merely a quiet, unhurried, small-town play. Anyway, Elizabeth Patterson is an actress who knows how to play that kind of material, and her final scene, coming just before the trick-curtain close of the play, is genuinely affecting.

J. Pat O'Malley gets some low-comedy characterization into the role of the invisible father of Sam Griggs. I feel that a more fluent actor could have done more than Harry Carey does with the part of Sam, a character not too well written. Sylvia Field looks and acts the role of the wistful librarian who is going off to the West with the geologist. And there are good performances from John Conway, Wendell Corey and Raymond Largay. Hal K. Dawson, to be remembered from "Dodsworth" and other plays, returns from the Sierras to play the role of a villager. Frank Wilcox, now a villian for a change, is quite a schemer as the wily Tom Carter.

George Seaton, for all his efforts to blend the supernatural with, say, "The Book of Charm," hardly has enough material to spread over his three acts. His piece is more of a notion than it is a play. I fear that not even ghosts can change the luck of the 48th Street Theater.

"—But Not Goodbye" doesn't come off.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
April 12, 1944

Ghosts Talk, Audience Yawns

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

ALTHOUGH Harry Carey dies of heart disease early in *—But Not Goodbye*, it is certainly not from having led a strenuous or palpitating life. Anything less strenuous or palpitating than Mr. Golden's new production—in which two of the characters are literally dead and most of the others give the appearance of being—would be hard to imagine. *—But Not Goodbye* is one of those homey sentimental comedies, those mild little offerings of hokum, in which you often wish you could hear a pin drop. It is laid in New England in 1910, which would also have been about the best time to bring it to Broadway.

Mr. Seaton is telling about how a happy little family—elderly parents, son and daughter—is affected by the sudden death, in seemingly penniless circumstances, of the father. Mr. Seaton's extra little wrinkle is to let Pop in—as a spectre—on what goes on; and since Pop needs someone to talk to, his father (who died during the Civil War) is also in attendance. The two of them hover about for a couple of acts, while Pop's best friend tries to cheat the widow of the money that is coming to her.

* * *

There is nothing particularly ghoulish about the dead men, but there is certainly nothing exhilarating. I'm afraid it takes Noel Coward to make ghosts worth anyone's while. Grandpa, a gentleman with a line of chatter that only angels could put up with, is one of the season's most trying characters.

The whole play indeed is frightfully talky and slow, with frequent stops for bits of homey philosophy, and occasional dives into wishy-washy sentiment. What humor there is is too mild to help much. With a play like *—But Not Goodbye*, harmless though it is, the theater is merely looking far back into its past.

* * *

Harry Carey and Elizabeth Patterson are pleasant as the old people and so are Sylvia Field, John Conway and Wendell Corey as the young ones. As grandpa, I don't suppose there was much J. Pat O'Malley could do but follow directions. Mr. Whorf's direction, incidentally, also seems on the slow side.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
April 12, 1944

—But Not Goodbye Heart-Warming, Droll

By BURTON RASCOE

THAT greatly beloved character actor of the movies, Harry Carey, returned to the Broadway stage last night, playing opposite an almost equally beloved character actress, Elizabeth Patterson, in an endearing and amusing little homily on the rewards of Heaven and earth, by George Seaton, entitled: But Not Goodbye, which John Golden presented at the 48th Street Theater.

The only trouble with the play is there isn't enough to it. What there is is heart-warming, suspenseful and a producer of chuckles; and if you go to it without expecting too much I think you will find it (as I did) a pleasant entertainment of the sort which makes you feel good afterward. If you are jaded, however, and require thrills, excitement, a lot of snappy dialogue and action or a heavy slug of pornography, this is not a play for you.

There is one bit in this comedy which is the sweetest, the most affecting, the most charming declaration of love I have ever seen and heard enacted on the stage—when Wendell Corey, as an absent-minded young geologist, who prides himself on having an analytical mind, arrives at the conclusion, by a devious process of reasoning, that the symptoms he has been experiencing are those of love for a librarian (Sylvia Field) and who, upon learning that his love is returned, quite earnestly asks her: "What is there about me for anyone to love?"

Great Sincerity

Mr. Corey's projection of an utterly honest, utterly naif, utterly good-hearted young man of serious character and purpose is such a fine and convincing achievement that it alone makes the play worth seeing. And Miss Patterson has one fairly long speech toward the end of the third act, in which, as Amy Griggs, who has just lost her husband after 43 years of marriage, she holds the audience breathless while she tells the minister and her children, simply, slowly, eloquently, why she is not grief-stricken, because she has a legacy of Sam Griggs' years of tenderness and love. . . . In print, as I relate it, that may sound like sentimental muah; but Miss Patterson gives the scene beauty and truth.

Sam Griggs (Mr. Carey) dies in the first act. His body lies on the floor upstairs whence he had been sent by his doctor, whom he had disobeyed by coming downstairs at all; his heart has failed him. Immediately Sam's spirit, however, descends to the living room in great anxiety, because Sam has departed this life not only leaving his wife and daughter penniless but having also, innocently, misappropriated his son's savings for a speculative venture. Moreover, he has kept his speculation a secret and the real estate investment has been made in the name of his partner.

Earth-Bound Ghost

Sam, in the living room, encounters the spirit of his father, who had been killed in a tavern brawl when he was 28, but who had "passed over" and had not remained a ghost, haunting his former residence, like some deceased persons who are "earth-bound by too great attachment to their possessions and their kin." Sam's father (J. Pat O'Malley) urges Sam not to stick around, because funerals are depressing, and tells him that his family will be all right; but Sam's conscience bothers him so much he has to remain until things are straightened out.

The entire action of the play takes place during the two and a half hours of the playing time, between 7 and 9:30 in the evening of a summer in 1910. Sam's son's trip to England to apprentice himself to a great shipbuilding company and Sam's daughter's marriage plans are blighted by the discovery that Sam left no money. It is Sam's spirit's job and that of his revenant father to demonstrate that faith works miracles and that virtue is rewarded; and they do it in an earthy, very human and irreverent manner. The solution is hardly orthodox eschatology and probably impious; but, in the circumstances it is a just judgment, anyway.

Mr. Carey and Miss Patterson are all that their fans could desire of them; their support is excellent, with particular honors going to Mr. Corey, as mentioned above, and to J. Pat O'Malley. Mr. Golden usually makes his authors direct their own plays but in this instance he permitted Richard Whorf the designer of the set, to direct: Mr. Whorf gets a big hand from this quarter for both jobs.

NEW YORK POST
April 12, 1944

'—But Not Goodbye' a Mildly Pleasant Little Comedy About Death

By WILELLA WALDORF

"—BUT NOT GOODBYE," the new play by George Seaton produced by John Golden and Harry Joe Brown last night at the 48th St. Theatre, is a comedy about what happens when Sam Griggs, a New England boatmaker of the 1910 era, dies of heart failure at the end of the first act. Sam has gone in on a secret real estate deal that sounded good at the time, but his sudden demise leaves his wife, son and daughter pretty badly off.

Sam's Dad, an engaging fellow with a thick Lancashire accent, turns up from the beyond to persuade his son to forget about earthly matters and come up and join mother, but Sam can't tear himself away until he finds out what the family will do about money.

"I know how it is," says dad. "You want to hang around for the funeral. Well, let me tell you, it's not what it's cracked up to be."

Dad's Younger but Wiser

Dad, as it happens, died in a tavern brawl at the age of 36, so he is considerably younger than his son Sam, but much, much wiser. He even has a bit of influence with the Almighty. Waggles his hands and brings on a heavy rainstorm, for instance.

Sam and Dad scuttle about the Griggs living room for two solid acts after Sam dies. None of the family can see them, of course, nor hear them, and they really can't do very much about anything except have faith, as Dad puts it.

When Sam's partner in the secret real estate deal actually makes a killing and then fails to deliver Sam's half to his widow, things look pretty bad for a while, but the author, or God, finally sees to it that there's what amounts to a happy ending.

"—But Not Goodbye" is charmingly presented under Richard Whorf's direction, and acted by an uncommonly pleasant company headed by Harry Carey, a sympathetic Sam; J. Pat O'Malley, a very entertaining Dad; Elizabeth Patterson, Sylvia Field, John Conway and Wendell Corey. Mr. Whorf has designed a beautifully homely 1910 setting and the difficult subject matter is invariably handled with good taste and warm feeling.

No "Outward Bound"

There is so much to recommend about Mr. Seaton's little play and the expert production it has been given that we hate to sound a slightly sour note by suggesting that it can hardly help reminding persistent theatre-goers of such works as "Outward Bound," "On Borrowed Time" and even "Our Town," without measuring up to any of them.

When all is said and done at the 48th Street, Mr. Seaton has not managed to get very far beyond stirring up a nice feeling for unselfishness and human decency. As a comedy it is often very amusing, but a comedy on a subject as profound as life after death should do something more than that, should it not? Or should it?

Mr. Seaton, praises be, does not go in for hifalutin but muddled Philosophizing in the Thornton Wilder manner. Nor does he permit himself to grow maudlin. There's something to be said for his restraint and the fact that he keeps his people homely and simple to the end.

Yet his play lacks the stimulating, almost breath-taking dramatic impact of "Outward Bound" and "On Borrowed Time."

A good try, but a slightly disappointing evening.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
April 12, 1944

Ghosts That Seem Earthbound

By LEWIS NICHOLS

IN "—But Not Goodbye," which opened last evening at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, George Seaton has written what presumably could be called a ghost story. At all events some of his characters are living on this sad old planet and the rest are living among the shades, although they are interested in what goes on among relatives and friends hereabout. A ghost clinging to physical connections is called earthbound, and he is — to grab a metaphor — neither fish nor fowl. Perhaps "—But Not Goodbye" is earthbound, too, for it is not a very funny comedy in so far as it concerns ghosts, and it is overly sentimental in so far as it concerns the living. Ghosts, and humans, and Broadway all deserve a little bit more than Mr. Seaton has given them.

* * *

The play tells of a shipbuilder who is on earth for the first act and away from earth for the next two. He has been making investments, and when he suddenly dies his wife and two children find the money gone and their several plans ended. How the ghost of the builder, and the ghost of his father, straighten out the family finances forms the plot of the play. Mr. Seaton has some ideas on the subject, but he presents them a little long-windedly and without arousing a great deal of interest. The ghostly cards are stacked quite obviously, and they are marked cards as well.

Any ghost story these days naturally invites comparison with Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit," a name which eventually will be making Mr. Seaton quite ill. That play dove headlong between heaven and earth, and obviously as a bit of theatrical realism was quite out of this world. "—But Not Goodbye" tries to be both realistic and fantastic at opposite ends of the stage. The comedy mainly is of the type saying ghosts can be neither seen nor heard, although they know what is going on. The sentiment is put on heavily, like a mason smoothing over a plaster wall, where the play strives for fantastic humor it sometimes succeeds in being only dull; and where it is being sentimental, it can be very cloying.

* * *

Harry Carey plays the leading role of shipbuilder and ghost in a calm, matter-of-fact fashion which serves the purpose. J. Pat O'Malley, on from Hollywood, is the ghost of the shipbuilder's father, and does it in a manner reminiscent of the mincing conscience of "Peep Show." Elizabeth Patterson is the wife and mother, and Sylvia Field and John Conway are the two children. Richard Whorf directed the play as well as doubling in brass as the designer of the living-room set, which is colorful and good. But the events which go on in the set cling too solidly to the prosaic earth; they do not soar as they should.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
April 12, 1944

Neither Alive Nor Dead

By HOWARD BARNES

LIFE after death is given a brisk hayride in "—But Not Goodbye." This metaphysical whimsy, which has opened at the Forty-eighth Street Theater, is a jocular contemplation of immortality. It pits spirits against real live folk, as a solid Yankee shipbuilder returns from the beyond to straighten out some tangled family affairs. Since Harry Carey and J. Pat O'Malley play wraiths with exuberant vitality, the work is quite a sales talk for being dead. As whimsy, it is lamentably lacking in dramatic invention and merriment.

* * *

George Seaton, who has composed some good continuities in Hollywood, is responsible for the newest nonsense on Broadway. He demonstrates considerable eloquence on occasion, particularly when he has the dead man's family discuss him as he is forced to stand by, without being able to register his presence. What the author has failed to do is to give his play more than a rambling structure. Fantasy depends on the most artful manipulation of characters and scenes. You will find little of the quality of, say, "Blithe Spirit" in his essay.

* * *

The more the pity with the smart production, staging and playing that has been lavished on the play. John Golden has given the script everything that it possibly could demand from a sponsor. Richard Whorf has made it fluent and frequently delightful in action. And Carey, Elizabeth Patterson, as the bereft widow; O'Malley, Frank Wilcox, Sylvia Field and the other interpreters of the show do their level best to keep the proceedings comic, rather than macabre. The trouble is that Seaton jokes about death without shoring up the jest with meaning.

* * *

The fable gets badly out of hand, for example, when the newly deceased head of a family and the pop whom he meets in the hereafter chase around the stage trying to keep the Griggs clan from being swindled. There is a funny ending, in which Wilcox, as the treacherous friend of the shipbuilder, gets struck by lightning, but it takes more than a trick ending to pull off this sort of a conceit. Carey and O'Malley have some merry scenes together and Miss Patterson lends a certain dignity to the straight base of the drama. There is too little base for a modicum of fancy in "—But Not Goodbye."

"Follow The Girls"

Musical comedy, book by Guy Bolton and Eddie Davis, additional dialogue by Fred Thompson, music by Dan Shapiro, Milton Pascal and Phil Charig; directed by Harry Delmar; settings by Howard Bay. Presented by David J. Wolper at the New Century Theatre, April 8, 1944.

THE CAST

Yokel Sailor	Bill Tabbert
Doorman	Ernest Goodhart
First Girl Fan	Terry Kelly
Second Girl Fan	Rae Macgregor
Bob Monroe	Frank Parker
Anna Viskinova	Irina Baronova
Goofy Gale	Jackie Gleason
Seaman Pennywhistle	Frank Kreig
Catherine Pepburn	Geraldine Stroock
Peggy Baker	Dorothy Keller
Sailor Val	Val Valentinoff
Marine	Charles Conaway, jr.
Bubbles LaMarr	Gertrude Niesen
Spud Doolittle	Tim Herbert
Dinky Riley	Buster West
Phyllis Brent	Toni Gilman
Dan Daley	Robert Tower
Petty Officer Banner	Lee Davis
Captain Hawkins	Walter Long
Waiter	Frank Greco
Felix Charrel	Val Valentinoff
Officer Flannagan	George Spaulding
Flirtatious Miss	Dell Parker
Dance Team	The Digatanos

NEW YORK POST
April 10, 1944

'Follow the Girls' a Rousing New Nautical Musical at the Century

By WILELLA WALDORF

IT took a serious theatre shortage to re-open Jolson's. A fine, roomy house at 7th Ave. at 59th St., it looked pretty seedy the last time we saw it some months ago. But last Saturday night along came Dave Wolper with "Follow the Girls" and behold!. Jolson's became the New Century. Attractively redocorated, it is now one of the pleasantest theatres in town, which is good news all around, for "Follow the Girls" happens to be the brightest and giddiest musical comedy Broadway has welcomed in months.

So many musical shows have proved dismal disappointments this season that we went to the New Century on Saturday all prepared to dig in and suffer. Instead we had a very good time.

"Follow the Girls" is not only beautiful to look at. It is almost always pleasant to listen to. Above all, it never takes itself too seriously. There is a light-hearted, tongue-in-cheek, attractively goofy quality about the whole show presided over by the rough but rollicking Gertrude Niesen.

Everything Very Matey

Miss Niesen seemed to be having such a high old time that she soon had the audience, and even some of the stuffier members of the company, in a happy state of inebriation. Eventually everybody became so matey that the audience took to hissing the villain and villainess, whereupon the villiain and villainess marched down to the footlights and hissed right back.

It is quite a time since we encountered a musical comedy book civilized enough to turn around and kid itself now and then, but that's what "Follow the Girls" does. There isn't any plot to speak of, and what there is they laugh off the stage just before the finale. But there's plenty of generally merry material for the comedians to fool with, a tuneful score with amusing lyrics, an astonishing amount of good dancing by a battery of experts headed by no less a personage than Irina Baronova of the Ballet Russe, and some of the handsomest scenic effects Howard Bay or anybody else ever invented, with costumes by Lou Eisele to match.

The Niesen Comic Touch

So many talented people deserve mention for their efforts at the New Century that the paper shortage seems shorter than ever today.

First, the surprising Miss Niesen. Surprising because we have never liked her before. In "Follow the Girls" she plays an easy-going, good-hearted strip-tease artiste without being too vulgar about it, and puts over a tough, ribald part with a comedy sense so sure that whenever anything starts out to be offensive, it turns into a lark before she's through with it. By the time the show was over, Miss Niesen had managed to remind us of everybody from Baby Snooks to Mae West.

Her two best songs are "Twelve O'Clock and All's Well," which she does straight, and "I Wanna Get Married," one of those wonderful wacky numbers that will eventually have dozens of verses.

Baronova of the Ballet

The mere presence of Irina Barinova in the cast lends "Follow the Girls" distinction, but Miss Baronova not only does several ballet numbers with her customary skill, she also acts a part with great charm and poise, displays a fetching accent and looks uncommonly attractive.

Catherine Littlefield's dance direction keeps things moving at a fast clip, with plenty of horn-pipe formations, since this is a show about sailors. There are individual contributions by such steppers as the agile Val Valentinoff, who doubles as a villain; by a talented little piece known as Dorothy Keller; by the DiGatanos, who go in for ballroom twirling; and by Buster West and Tim Herbert, a couple of wild men in sailor suits who not only tap and shake themselves into a jelly, but team up with two-ton Jackie Gleason to inject some roistering comedy into the proceedings.

Jackie is funnier than we have ever seen him. Perhaps his high point of the evening was a terrific struggle getting into various garments officially worn by the WAVES. He made a very large WAVE indeed, almost a tidal WAVE.

We almost forgot to mention that Frank Parker, a radio tenor who acts and sounds just like a radio tenor, warbled limpidly from time to time without causing undue enthusiasm in this department. But then we don't swoon over Sinatra either.

"Follow the Girls" is a lot of fun. See it, if you can get in.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
April 10, 1944

Irina Baronova, of Ballet Russe, Is the Hit of 'Follow the Girls'

By JOHN CHAPMAN

OUT of the old Al Jolson Theater next door to Central Park the Shuberts have made a gay and gaudy auditorium, and into it a man named Dave Wolper has put a musical "Follow the Girls," which is bright, beautiful, noisy—and gay once in a while but not very often.

The new theatre is called the Century, and you can tell it has been modernized because there aren't any racks for gents' hats under the seats. The new star of "Follow the Girls" is Irina Baronova, an honest-to-goodness Russian prima ballerina who used to dance with a lovely dead pan in the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Miss Baronova has caught most of the American musical comedy tricks without losing the basic skill of the classic dance, and she's the most attractive heroine I've seen ih a long time, even if she doesn't sing.

No Dream Ballet!

I have remarked before that night club operators taking a flier in the theatre with some of their saloon profits don't quite know the difference between a musical comedy and a floor show. They buy fine costumes, hire a chorus of dazzingly beautiful girls, and then don't know what to do next. Their judgment of songs is only fair and their idea of comedy ranges from punk to putrid.

Producer Wolper has shown better judgment than most. "Follow the Girls" is fairly well routined, its songs are average, its chorous and show-girl lineup is the most beautiful in town, Howard Bay's sets are excellent, Lou Eisele's costumes are numerous, brilliantly colored and sexy, and Catherine Littlefield's dance arrangements are superior. You might be happy to know that all of the dances are straight chorus stuff and there isn't a dream ballet in the show, and I recommend the sailor's horn-pipe number which opens the second act.

The lady who gets top billing in the programs is Gertrude Niesen, who can sing a smokehouse song in a smoky voice. She has a dirty ditty called "I Wanna Get Married" which had Saturday's first-nighters asking for more after she had run through umpteen verses. She also has one of those slow songs for chest tones, titled "Twelve O'Clock and All Is Well," which struck me as being quite good. Miss Niesen makes a great deal of use of her chest, but only sometimes for tones. And she flips her thighs with the cute abandon of a seal flapping his flippers.

Stripper and Sailors

Which is as it should be, I suppose, because Miss Niesen' role is that of Bubbles, a strip tease queen. Which brings up the business of plot. Now that it has been duly brought up, let's drop it. All you need to know is that the whole show takes place around the Spotlight Canteen and a naval training station at Great Neck, L. I., and the chorus boys are in uniform.

The comedy in "Follow the Girls" falls to Jackie Gleason, Buster West and Tim Herbert. The portly Mr. Gleason has better material than he usually gets and as a lovesick jerk who suffers from the jerks he is amusing. I probably am not competent to pass calm judgment on Mr. West and Mr. Herbert, for I am a pushover for their type of comic vaudeville dancing and mugging, and I can watch them work any time.

Frank Parker shares song assignments with Miss Niesen and the best of his numbers is "Where You Are." Val Valentinoff does a lot of leaping around the stage as though he might want to get out of the place, the Di Gitanos do some of their dazzling ballroom tricks, and Dorothy Keller works furiously and pertly at several tap numbers.

"Follow the Girls" is not the best musical show in town by four, but the sets, the chorus, the Littlefield dance numbers and, foremost, Irina Baronova make it a generous evening.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
April 10, 1944

And Well Worth Following

By HOWARD BARNES

A ROWDY and engaging musical show has come to the reconverted Jolson Theater, now known as the Century. "Follow the Girls" has no great distinction. It pretends to little. What makes it so welcome a gift from the Easter bunnies is the fact that it is an enthusiastic blend of ballet, bistro and burlesque doings. With Gertrude Niesen, Irina Baronova, Frank Parker, Jackie Gleason and their assistants performing as though they were having huge fun themselves, a scrammy script, decorated with some wonderfully comic song numbers and delectable dancing girls, it is a spring-time delight.

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For that matter, it would take quite a bit of arguing to convince me that this Dave Wolper production was not the best song and dance carnival that we have had the good luck to see this season. Guy Bolton, who is an old hand at musical comedy composition, and the ebullient hack driver, Eddie Davis, have cooked up a time-bomb book, which splutters considerably in the first act but explodes triumphantly in the second. Dan Shapiro, Milton Pascal and Phil Charig have knocked out some conventional song numbers and have thrown in several hilarious ditties for good measure. The Howard Bay settings are nicely adapted to the antics of the cast and Harry Delmar's staging has the great virtue of achieving a crescendo of merriment.

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It would be idle to look for the inspired design of such musicals as "Show Boat," "The Hand Wagon" or "Oklahoma!" in "Follow the Girls." The tale of gobs, girls and goofy passers-by is merely an excuse for a variety of high-jinks. Since Miss Niesen is in there giving it her all, from bumps to sly renditions of "I Wanna Get Married" and "A Tree That Grows in Brooklyn," the general improvisation is triumphant. Miss Baranova lends elegance to the proceedings with her brilliant dancing, while Val Valentinoff and the Digatanos add superior night-club turns to several scenes, with soft shoe and ball-room terpischore.

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The principal flaw of the show, as a show, is in no way serious if you see it through. The first act just has too much material in it. Once the intermission is over and Parker and the chorus swing into "John Paul Jones,"

there is no missing the infectious gayety of the concoction. There is a ridiculous burlesque scene in which Gleason kidnaps a petty officer who tries to make him seasick, with Buster West and Tim Herbert proving of great assistance, followed by the Niesen numbers mentioned in the preceding paragraph. "Follow the Girls" is rough and tumble, topical, and vastly amusing. In its frame of fetching feminine charms it should be a reigning favorite on Broadway for a long time to come.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
April 10, 1944

'Follow the Girls' At New Century

By ROBERT GARLAND

IT took a quarter-of-a-hundred experts to whip up "Follow the Girls," which, night before last, reopened the erstwhile Jolson Theatre. Tucked neatly in between the Manhattan Riding Club and Central Park, the playhouse dedicated by the King of Mammy Singers as long ago as 1921 has been redecorated beyond recognition. It also has been renamed. Now the New Century, it is one of the most splendid and spacious show-shops on Manhattan.

During the years the New Century was under the management of the Messrs. Shubert, it housed many a memorable production. After Mr. Jolson opened it with "Bombo," it was the home of "The Student Prince," which ran from the December of 1924 to the December of 1925; "My Maryland," the song-hit of which is now the theme of radio's Newsreel Theatre, "The World We Live In"; the Moscow Art Theatre and the Odeon Company fresh overseas from peace-time Paris.

Eventually the Jolson passed from the Shuberts' hands. Sliding steadily down grade, it housed all sorts of indiscriminate attractions, including plays in Yiddish, operas in Italian, and motion-pictures of one kind or another. Repurchased by the Shubert brothers, the auditorium, the lobbies and the stage have been rebuilt and redecorated. There, it looks as if Dave Wolper's "Follow the Girls" has moved in to stay.

Experts Galore

Returning to those quarter-of-a-hundred experts who whipped up this "Follow the Girls," they're headed by Harry Delmar, who staged it; Guy Bolton and Eddie Davis, who wrote it; Fred Thompson, who added dialogue; Dan Shapiro, Milton Pascal and Phil Charig, who attended to the songs; Howard Bay, who attended to the scenery; Catherine Littlefield, who attended to the dances; Lou Eisele, who attended to the Costumes, and Will Erwin, who attends to the orchestra.

Add to these, Dave Wolper as producer; Albert Board as associate producer; nine orchestral arrangers; an assistant to Mr. Wolper; an assistant to Miss Littlefield; one press representative; one special exploitation expert; one sound consultant, and all the rest of them, you can readily understand why Mr. Wolper's maiden attempt at musical comedy is something of a hodge-podge. A glittering hodge-podge, let me hasten to add!

Night before last, it was in me to wonder if night club humor isn't one thing, musical-comedy humor another. For, as was the "Artists and Models," produced last Fall by Lou Walters, "Follow the Girls" gives the impression of being a night-club production enlarged out of its true proportions and set up too elaborately on the stage of a musical-comedy theatre. To my way of thinking, it calls for an accompaniment of food and drink, cigarets and sotto voce conversatioon.

La Niesen Tops

It is my misfortune that, until Saturday night's premiere, I had neither seen nor heard Gertrude Niesen. This blond and sultry lady is most certainly the mainstay of Mr. Wolper's on-stage floor show: No one can deny that she has a way with her, especially when she sings. There's no sort of song she cannot make her own, whether it be so doleful a ditty as "Twelve o'Clock and All Is Well," so brazen a ballad as "I Wanna Get Married" or so nifty a number as "A Tree That Grows in Brooklyn."

Next to Miss Niesen, I recommend Dorothy Keller and Val Valentinoff to your attention. Miss Keller, who made her debut on a horse in Billy Rose's "Jumbo," is altogether charming in the role of Peggy Baker. Both as a singer and a dancer, she has much to give. And gives it! So has Mr. Valentinoff as Sailor Val. As a matter of fact, not nearly enough use is made of that tall, dark and good looking gentleman at the Century.

Other highlights are Buster West's return to what practically amounts to vaudeville; the ballroom dancing of Jayne and Adam DiGatano; the solo dancing of Irina Baronova; most, but not all, of the settings by Howard Bay; some, but not all, of the costumes by Lou Eisele, and the trombone player in the orchestra who looks like the late Heywood Broun. The low-light is the sea-sick bedroom scene . . . "Follow the Girls" is handsome, haphazard and not overly hilarious.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
April 10, 1944

Follow the Girls Brightly Amusing

By BURTON RASCOE

FOLLOW THE GIRLS, with which Dave Wolper reopened the Shuberts' newly-redecorated Century Theater on Saturday night, is a glorified and expanded night club floor show rather than a musical comedy and as such it is very good indeed—nothing to rave about, but fast-paced, clean, ingratiating, iridescent and entertaining. It deserves to prosper and, from all indications, it will. Whatever the show lacks in what is known, in the patois of Shubert Alley, as socko is compensated by the generally infectious gayety of the proceedings.

Gertrude Niesen, who heads the cast, knows how to put over a song with an air of sophisticated camaraderie without vulgarity; she can take an audience into her confidence without abusing the intimacy; and she can be amusingly naughty without any suggestion of coarseness or salacity. She is definitly a personality and a very friendly and gifted one. The hit song of the evening was her rendition of I Wanna Get Married, in which, with numerous encores, she caricatured brides of various kinds and temperaments from the demure and virginal type to that of a bedraggled and alcoholic fifth-timer.

Jackie Gleason Funny

Jackie Gleason, her fat and comical vis-a-vis in the vague romance which trickles through Follow the Girls, is a good-natured and likable pantaloon with some of that engagingly honest naivete which made Sonny Tufts such a pleasant addition to the ranks of movie players. Gleason does his stuff in an off-hand, apparently effortless manner, with none of that frantic, scenery-biting horseplay which some comedians indulge in. He has one stock gag, which, surprisingly enough, is always surprising and funny.

Buster West and Tim Herbert, who team up as sailor pals in the show, are also delightfully casual and clean in their comedy, often achieving their most laughable effects when you think their routine is over and as if as the result of an unpremeditated reflex action after they had stepped out of character while still on stage. Buster's trick is to say something as though it had no connection with the act; Tim's is to break his dance steps and gesticulate with his legs.

Radio listeners know that Frank Parker has one of the most beautiful tenor voices heard on the air. He has one song, Where You Are, which he sings intermittently all through the show. It sounds better, because of the way he sings it, than I suspect it inherently is. . . . The most melodious musical composition, however, is You Don't Dance, a waltz sung by a cute, curvy and vivacious little minx named Dorothy Keller, who hasn't much of a voice but who clowns and dances with blithe spirit.

Irina Baronova, a ballet dancer who looks a little like Celeste Holm, performs with all the technical precision of a well-trained horse in the circus, but she is attractive and was a favorite with the audience. So, also was Val Valentinoff a solo ballet favorite, but his muscular acrobatics made me think of the noisy zeal with which those bravos of the department of street cleaning throw garbage cans about. . . . The best dancer in the outfit, as a matter of fact, is Buster West.

Fat Boy's Love

The book tells of the love of a fat boy, rejected by the medical examiner for the armed services (Mr. Gleason), for a stripper (Miss Niesen) who is serving her country's cause by devoting her talents exclusively to the USO. She is a stripper who never takes off anything but her fur wrap and her long gloves; but her voice is so sultry and her clothed torso so provocative that sailors climb trees or fall flat on their faces at the mere sight of her. But the book is strictly from burlesque, and, considering the source, practically immaculate and entirely inoffensive.

The settings by Howard Bay and the costumes by Lou Eisle are in the grand tradition of Ziegfeldian voluptousness and color; one costume number—that of bridesmaids in slightly varying hues of petal pink, rose, mauve and lavender—brought an outburst of applause. The music, directed by Will Irwin with verve, is serviceable. The chorus is pretty and unusually well trained. The comedy is largely of the seltzer syphon school but funny . . . Recommended.

THE NEW YORK SUN
April 10, 1944

'Follow the Girls,' Opening the New Century, Is Fast and Funny Show

By WARD MOREHOUSE

BACK in the not so long ago—in the fall of 1909, specifically—an august playhouse called the New Theater opened its doors way uptown, 63d street and Central Park West. Its name was later changed to the Century, but for most of its years it was a house of ill-fortune. Now along comes a new Century, all new and aglitter inside, and Saturday night it got off to an exciting start with a musical comedy, "Follow the Girls."

Here is a fast and buoyant show—a song and dance production that has some lively tunes, superior dancing, amusing lyrics and excellent people. It has a comedian in Jackie Gleason who, in his own jovial and elaphantine way, can be almost as funny as Bobby Clark. And the song, "I Wanna Get Married," as plaintively sung by Gertrude Niesen, is a show-stopping number that will be one of the town's hits all spring and summer. This "Follow the Girls" is going to be around for quite a while. You will like it.

There are suggestions of a book here and there, and one with nautical trimmings, but the book is never one that gets you down. Whenever it begins to sag a little they give you a good dance number or Jackie Gleason as Goofy Gale comes to the rescue. The second act is the better of the two and it's in this act that Miss Niesen stampedes the house with "I Wanna Get Married." There are other good numbers, too—"You're Perf," "Follow the Girls" (which a cast full of sailors is forever doing) and "A Tree That Grows in Brooklyn."

The glib Jackie Gleason, who took most of the honors some months ago in the short-

lived "Artists and Models," is in top form. You will also like Irina Baronova, the ballerina, making her musical comedy debut; Frank Parker, Dorothy Keller, Toni Gilman, the tough-talking Lee Davis and Jayne and Adam DiGatano. The acrobatic and comical Buster West is around, teamed with Tim Herbert. Pretty Geraldine Stroock gives a fetching imitation of Katharine Hepburn. And as for Miss Niesen, in the role of Bubbles LaMarr she does well with all her songs and handles the "I Wanna Get Marrried" number with the authority of a Merman.

Dave Wolper and Harry Delmar have given this "Follow the Girls" terrific pace. They've put good looks and nimbleness into the ensemble. They've turned to the brilliant Howard Bay, as ever so many managers seem to be doing, for the scenery. And they actually have a book, this one by Guy Bolton and Eddie Davis, in which the jokes are all right. This new show is never the elaborate fiesta that "Mexican Hayride" is but, honest, it's far funnier.

So the news, then, from Seventh avenue and Central Park South, is very pleasant indeed. "Follow the Girls" is a romp—gay and fast and funny. Call it a hit. I don't think it can possibly miss.

NEW YORK TIMES
April 10, 1944

THE PLAY IN REVIEW
"Follow the Girls"

By LEWIS NICHOLS

THE New Century Theatre, nee the Jolson and up near the park, rejoined the human race on Saturday evening, when Dave Wolper offered a pleasant enough if not distinguished, musical comedy called "Follow the Girls." In the Broadway tradition of color and noise, of dance steps, familiar comedy and songs, it is big and always active. It is staffed by a group of people who obviously like their work and who do not lose their gaity even when, as occasionally happens, the circumstances may be faintly trying. Following the girls is one of the pleasures of spring—along with three other seasons—and Mr. Wolper and his friends make it easy and agreeable.

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The major credit for the cheer of the show necessarily must go to the cast, whose members without exception are extremely likable. It has been known for some time that Gertrude Niesen has a sultry voice which can deliver with equal ease a love song, a torch song—there is a distinction—or a leering ballad about the seamy, practical side of life. What had not been generally known before Saturday is that Gertrude Niesen can be a comedienne of many and considerable talents. She has a graceful ease of manner and a pert and expressive face—and, since this is a musical show, is O. K. by figure—which go very well with the voice. Miss Niesen is not afraid of outlandish costumes, and she does not insist on dignity. Quite properly, in "Follow the Girls" hers is the name in large lights.

But the others cannot be disregarded, even though the book of the show gives every indication of making an earnest try in that direction. Working practically without material are Jackie Gleason, Buster West and Tim Herbert, and even if their comedy lines are undoubtedly sour, no one can dispute their good will. Mr. Gleason is rotund, with a fat man's beaming face; some day when he gets the words he will be wonderful instead of just very good, as in the case in point. Irina Baronava has been snatched from the ballet stage to do several dances as well as to be an ingenue, and succeeds in both in this, her musical comedy debut.

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The company also includes Frank Parker, who sings the male songs; Dorothy Keller, a cheerful and active dancer, and Jayne & Adam DiGatano, the dance team. Since it must live up to its title, the show specializes in the ladies, and there is no nonsense whatsoever about that. The chorus is pretty, the show girls are stately and mainly blonde; the chorus has been trained by Catherine Littlefield so that it dances brightly, and the show girls have been trained to the proper dignified carriage. The settings by Howard Bay form a good background, and Lou Eisele's costumes are bright, although some may be better than others.

The book of "Follow the Girls" is banal, of course, and Guy Bolton and Eddie Davis, who wrote it, should go and stand in a cornor. The plot, if any, is about a burlesque queen in a service men's canteen, and it is so bad they simply throw it away and do vaudeville for the greater part of the second act. A good many of the jokes are racy, as they say, but probably racy jokes belong in this kind of a show. The music and lyrics, by Dan Shapiro, Milton Pascal and Phil Charig are serviceable rather than good; a song called "Where You Are" gets most of the reprises, with "Today Will Be Yesterday Tomorrow" and "You're Perf" being a couple of the others. "Follow the Girls" isn't Perf, but in this laggard spring it is good Broadway.

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
April 10, 1944

Lovely Girls, But Even So . . .

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

BUT for two such negligible items as the music and the book, *Follow the Girls* would be a thoroughly pleasant musical comedy. It boasts a number of competent, likeable and hardworking performers. The dancing has zest and liveliness. The chorus is good-looking, Lou Eisele's costumes are attractive, Howard Bay's sets are handsome and stylish, and there is a general atmosphere of bustle and good humor.

But the tunes and the book are, after all, the meat and potatoes of musical comedy, and no amount of side-dishes, relishes, garnishing and pastry-tubing adds up to a really good meal. There isn't a song in *Follow the Girls* that I could whistle for you at the point of a gun, or that is even tantalizing in a dum-de-dum-dum kind of way. The two torch songs achieve a kind of low by not even being reminiscent of anything. Nor are the lyrics, whether satirical or suggestive, even faintly tinged with smartness or wit. They are merely off the Broadway rhyme-belt, and it is to Gertrude Niesen's credit that she puts over two or three crude songs on sheer personality and showmanship.

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The best that can be said for the book is that it virtually dispenses with a plot and so doesn't too badly swamp the proceedings. Miss Niesen is a celebrated strip-teaser besought by a heel of a petty officer and a honey of a bogus sailor; the right one wins. Frank Parker is a Navy man whose romance with a dancer is dislocated by a lady spy; virtue triumphs. The book is cursed, however, by its general flatness and moldy humor. The first act is simply a compendium of fourth-rate gags; the second act a combination of burlesque-show horseplay and blackouts.

The cast does better by all this than it deserves. Miss Niesen makes an engaging toughie, whether brandishing sex in *Strip Flips Hip*, or italicizing the ribaldries of *I Wanna Get Married*, or bounding around with the boys in *A Tree That Grows in Brooklyn*. Jackie Gleason is a lively comic with a nice personality, and Tim Herbert and Buster West have a light manner and even lighter feet. Dorothy Keller is a pert little dancer who winds up one number in fine style. Irina Baronova is a finished ballerina, but could have more and better things to do, the more so as she has personality. And Frank Parker sings nicely.

As a big Broadway show, aimed at the world and his wife, *Follow the Girls* will undoubtedly prosper. But the straight Broadway tradition can do better than this. And if you want something really fresh and tuneful and a little different, don't bother to read any further.

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